Henry Irving's answer was delightful. He spoke with good sense, good humour and good breeding, and it was all spontaneous. I wish that a phonograph had been in existence that night, and that a record had been taken of the speech. It would be so good for the people who have asserted that Henry Irving always employed journalists (when he could not get Poets Laureate!) to write his speeches for him ! The voice was always the voice of Irving, if the hands were sometimes the hands of the professional writer. When Henry was thrown on his debating resources he really spoke better than when he prepared a speech, and his letters prove, if proof were needed, how finely he could write! Those who represent him as dependent in such matters on the help of literary hacks are just ignorant of the facts.

During the many years that I played Portia I seldom had a Bassanio to my mind. It seems to be a most difficult part, to judge by the colourless and disappointing renderings that are given of it, George Alexander was far the best of my Bassanio bunch ! Mr. Barnes, " hand-some Jack Barnes," as we called him, was a good actor, is a good actor still, as every one kno\vs, but his gentility as Bassanio was overwhelming. It was said of him that he thought more of the rounding of his legs than the charms of his affianced wife, and that in the love-scenes he appeared to be taking orders for furniture! This was putting it unkindly, but there was some truth in it.

He was so very dignified! My sister Floss

(Floss was the first Lyceum Nerissa) and I once tried to make him laugh by substituting two [8i] almond rings " for the real rings. "Handsome Jack " lost his temper, which made us laugh the more. He was quite right to be angry. Such fooling on the stage is very silly. I think it is one of the evils of long runs ! When we had seen " handsome Jack Barnes " imperturbably pompous for two hundred nights in sue-